



First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Alberta Region  
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## **Special Bulletin to First Nations Chiefs in Alberta**

August 26, 2021

To All First Nations Chiefs in Alberta:

I am writing to express my concern over the recent increase in active cases of COVID-19 in Alberta. I also want to take this opportunity to outline how Indigenous Services Canada, Alberta Region (ISC-AB) is responding to the recent changes to provincial public health measures.

Alberta has entered the fourth wave of the pandemic, and the highly infectious B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant has become the dominant COVID-19 strain in the province. This surge in COVID-19 case numbers is already affecting 35 First Nations communities. In August 2021, there have been 317 COVID-19 cases reported in First Nations communities. Compared to case numbers in July of 2021, that is an alarming increase of 420%.

At this time, ISC-AB is aware of cases associated with the recent Alberta Indigenous Games held in Edmonton. Please see the annex to this bulletin for more information.

Alberta is currently transitioning its COVID-19 response, and the province has indicated that remaining restrictions and public health orders will likely be lifted by September 27, 2021. ISC-AB and the Medical Officers of Health (MOH) team are available to work with you and your communities to maintain an enhanced COVID-19 response, which includes supporting First Nations with testing, case management, and contact tracing efforts as needed. I encourage you to coordinate with your health staff on submissions to the regional Communicable Disease Emergencies (CDE) Inbox at [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca) to request surge supports as required. Please see attached the community request form regarding COVID-19 public health supports. I also encourage you and your Nation members to visit the [Alberta OneHealth COVID-19 webpage](#) to access a variety of resources, including guidance on the new K-12 school year, Telehealth series information, and immunization handouts and tools.

The most important public health intervention available at this time is immunization for those eligible aged 12 and older. A full vaccine series of two doses at the recommended interval (4-12 weeks between doses) is proven to be the best protection against COVID-19, including the Delta variant. All approved vaccines are safe, effective, and readily available at doctor's offices, pharmacies, and health centres throughout Alberta.

With active cases rising once again, your ongoing partnership and support remains as crucial as ever. I commend you, health staff, community members, and everyone who has come together in these difficult times to respond to this pandemic prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

*Chris Sarin*

Dr. Chris Sarin  
Senior Medical Officer of Health  
Indigenous Services Canada, Alberta Region

Cc: First Nations Health Directors  
Dr. Parminder Thiara, Regional Director, Primary and Population Health, ISC-AB  
Rhonda Laboucan, Regional Executive Officer, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch,  
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## **Information on Confirmed Cases and Potential Exposures to COVID-19 Related to the Alberta Indigenous Games 2021**

The Alberta Indigenous Games were held in Edmonton, Alberta from August 12-19, 2021. At this time, at least fourteen cases of COVID-19 have been identified in various communities in Alberta and Saskatchewan through contact tracing efforts that are connected to the Alberta Indigenous Games.

Alberta Indigenous Games events occurred in several venues throughout Edmonton, including the following:

- Callingwood Park
- Goldstick Park and Pavilion
- Michael Cameron Arena
- Rundle Park
- Saville Community Sports Centre
- St. Francis Xavier Sports Centre
- Tipton Arena
- West Edmonton Mall (Ice Palace)

All fourteen of the identified cases are either confirmed or believed to be unvaccinated. These cases were infectious while at the Games or potentially acquired the infection there. For further information on the 2021 Games and an event schedule, please visit the [Alberta Indigenous Games website](#).

Indigenous Services Canada, Alberta Region (ISC-AB) and its partners are actively investigating this situation. The ISC-AB Medical Officers of Health team recommends individuals who attended/participated in the Alberta Indigenous Games self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days following your last potential exposure (you can take Alberta Health Services' [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#)). Core symptoms for adults can include:

- Cough;
- Fever;
- Shortness of breath;
- Sore throat;
- Runny nose, and/or;
- Loss of sense of taste or smell.

Further information on testing and other symptoms can be found at the [Government of Alberta Symptoms and Testing webpage](#). Should you develop symptoms, ISC-AB's Medical Officers of Health team recommends you self-isolate and arrange testing through your local health centre.